

ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

The present invention is a fluorescent probe for detecting chemicals, particularly chemical warfare agents. The probe has a novel selection of polymers and fluorophores that allow for laser excitation and photodiode detection of chemical warfare agents. A probe based on poly(epichlorohydrin) as the polymer and nile blue A perchlorate as the fluorophore is sensitive to concentrations of mustard of less than 30 ppb. Probes based on fluoropolyol as the polymer and oxazine 170 perchlorate as the fluorophore is sensitive to low concentrations of soman. Selecting a cationic fluorophore that has an affinity for the chemical agent of interest and immobilizing that fluorophore in a polymer matrix provides a fluorescent probe capable of detecting the presence of the desired chemical agent in trace quantities. A set of probes may be used so that in the presence of an analyte or a mix of analytes one or more of the probes may be responsive.